Black Beauty

Anna Sewell

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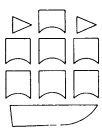
Simplified by D K Swan



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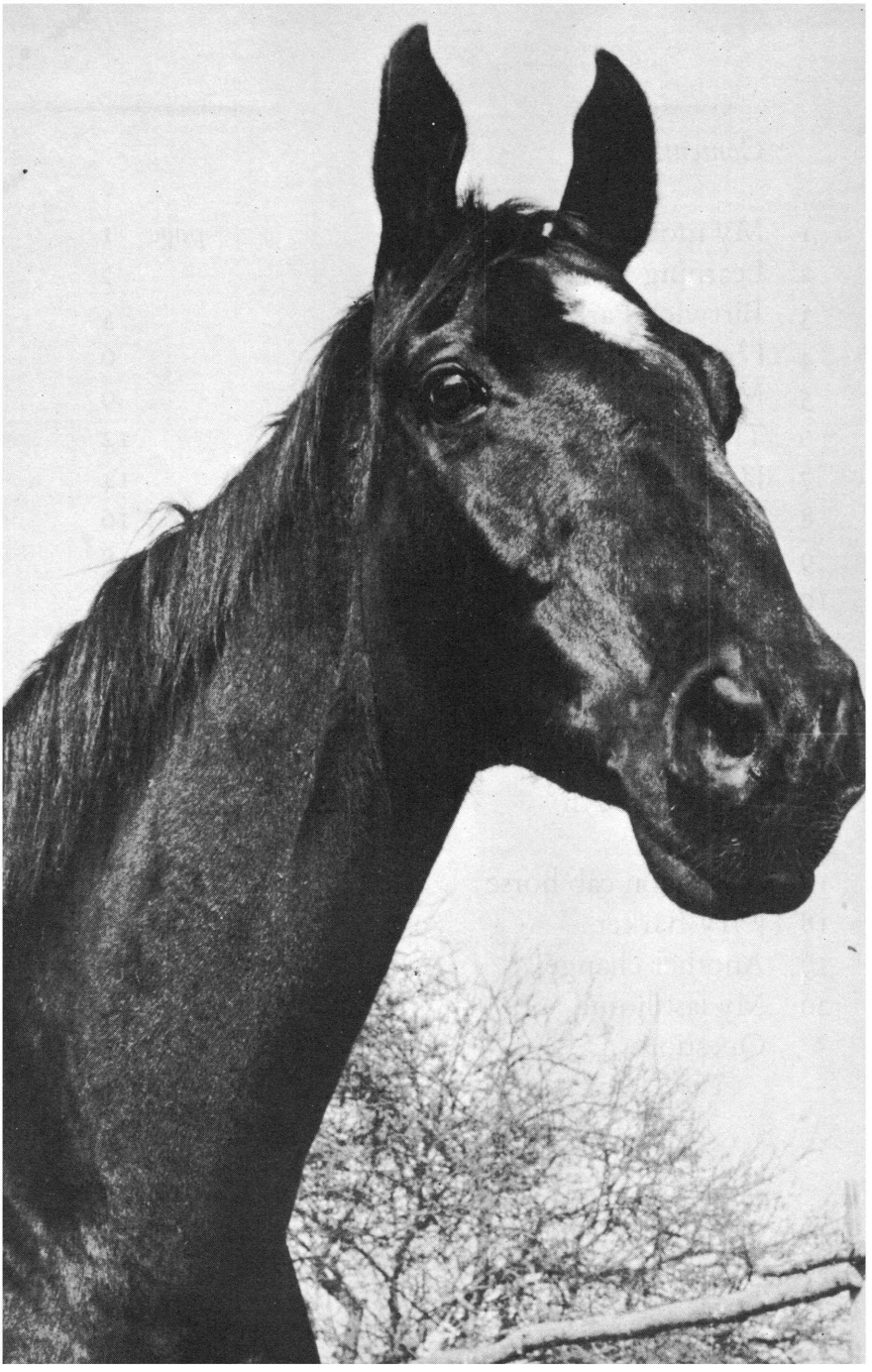


1 *My mother*

I don't remember everything about the time when I was very small. I remember a big field of green grass. There were a few trees in it, and on hot days my mother stood under a tree and I drank her milk. That was before I grew bigger and began to eat the grass.

There were some other young horses in the field. As we grew bigger, we played and ran round and round the field. We jumped about, or we went down on our backs on the grass and kicked our legs happily in the air. We were glad to be alive.

When I stopped taking her milk, my mother went to work every day. She came back in the evening, and I told her all about my day.

'I'm glad you are happy,' she said. 'Play as much as you can. But you must remember that you are not like these other young horses. They are all going to be farm horses; they're good horses, but not like us. Your father is well known in this part of the country, and your grandfather—my father—was Lord Westland's best horse. When you're a little older, you'll learn to take people on your back or to take them from place to place in their carriages.'

I asked, 'Is that what your work is, Mother? Is that what you do for Farmer Grey?'

'Yes, that's what I do. Farmer Grey sometimes rides me and sometimes drives me as his carriage horse. Here he is now.'

Farmer Grey came into the field. He was a good, kind man, and he liked my mother very much.

'Well, my dear Duchess,' he said to her, 'here's something for you.' He gave her something nice to eat. 'And how is your little son?' He patted me and gave me some bread, which was very nice.

We couldn't answer him, but my mother showed him that she loved him. He patted her and went away.

'He's very kind,' my mother said, 'and you must learn to please him. Always do your work gladly, and never bite or kick. Then he'll always be nice to you.'

2 *Learning*

I grew older. My coat began to look very good. It was black. I had one white foot, a white star on my face, and a small white mark on my back, but every other part of me was black.

When I was grown up, Squire Gordon came to look at me. He looked at my eyes, my mouth, and my legs.

'Very good,' he said. 'Very good. Now he must learn to work. He'll be a very good horse then.'

What must a horse learn?

He must learn to stand still when a man puts harness on him. The bad part of a horse's harness is the bit. If you have never had a bit, you can't think how bad it is. It is a cold hard iron thing, and the

man puts it into your mouth. It hurts. You can't move it because the head harness—over your head, under your mouth, and across your nose—makes it stay in your mouth.

I was very unhappy with the bit in my mouth, but Farmer Grey was kind in every other way. I didn't bite or kick. My mother always had a bit in her mouth when she was working. Other horses have bits too. I knew that. So I stood still when they put it in. After a time it didn't hurt me so very much.

The saddle wasn't so bad. A horse must learn to have a saddle and to take a man, woman, or child on his back. He must go where the rider wants him to go, and he must go at a walk, or (a little quicker) a trot, or (very quick) a gallop.

They put the bit in my mouth and the saddle on my back every day. Then Farmer Grey himself walked with me round the big field. After that, he gave me some good food, and patted me, and spoke to me. I liked the food and the patting and kind words, and after a time I wasn't afraid of the bit and the saddle.

One day Farmer Grey got on my back and sat there in the saddle. The next day he rode me once round the field at a walk. It wasn't very nice with a man in the saddle, but I was glad to have my kind master on my back. He rode me in the field every day for a time.

The next bad thing was putting iron shoes on me.

Farmer Grey went with me, but I was still afraid. The man took my feet in his hands, one after the other. Then he cut away some of the hard part. It didn't hurt me, so I stood still on three legs as he did each of my feet. Then he made iron shoes to go on them. Putting them on didn't hurt, but I couldn't move my feet in the same way as before. After a time I grew to like the shoes. They saved my feet from hard roads and stones.

Next I learnt to go in carriage harness. There was a very small saddle, but there was a big collar, and there were blinkers at the sides of my face. With the blinkers on I could see things in front of me, not to the side.

Farmer Grey began by making me pull a carriage with my mother. 'You'll learn a lot from her,' he said, as he put the harness on me.

I did learn a lot. She showed me how to move, and how to know what the driver wanted.

'But there are good drivers and bad drivers,' she said. 'And there are good masters and bad masters. Farmer Grey is a good master—a very good master. He's kind, and he thinks about his horses, but there are other men who are bad, or hard, or just foolish. You must always be good, and try to make people love you. Never be lazy, even if people are unkind to you or foolish.'

3 *Birtwick Park*

In May a man came to take me away to Squire Gordon's home at Birtwick Park.

'Be a good horse,' Farmer Grey said to me, 'and always do your best.'

I couldn't say anything, so I put my nose in his hand. He patted me kindly.

Birtwick Park was big. There was a big house, and there were a lot of stables for horses and places for many carriages. I was taken to a stable for four horses.

They gave me some food, and when I had eaten it I looked round me. There was a pony in the next part of the stable. He was small and fat, with a pretty head and happy eyes.

'Who are you?' I asked.

'My name is Merrylegs. I'm very beautiful. I take the young ladies on my back. Everybody loves me. You must be good if you live next to me in this stable. I don't like horses who bite.'

A horse looked at Merrylegs from the other side. She had a very beautiful red-brown coat, but her eyes looked angry, and her ears were laid back in the way an angry horse puts its ears.

'Have I ever bitten you?' she asked angrily.

'No, no!' Merrylegs said quickly.

When the red-brown horse went out to work that afternoon, Merrylegs told me about her. 'Ginger does bite,' he said. 'One day she bit James in the

arm and hurt him. Miss Flora and Miss Jessie, Squire Gordon's little girls, are afraid of her. They don't bring me nice things to eat now, because Ginger is here.'

'Why does she bite?' I asked. 'Is she bad?'

'Oh no! I think she has been very unhappy. She says that nobody had ever been kind to her before she came here. She'll change here. I'm twelve years old, and I know a lot. I can tell you that there isn't a better place for a horse than this, anywhere. John is the best groom in the country; James is the kindest boy; and Squire Gordon is the best master any horse ever had. Yes, Ginger will change here.'

4 *I begin well*

The head groom's name was John Manly. He lived with his wife and one little child in a very small house near the stables.

The next morning he took me outside the stable and groomed me. He worked hard, and made my coat clean and beautiful. Then Squire Gordon came to look at me.

'He looks very good,' the Squire said. 'I wanted to try him myself this morning, but I have some other work. So you ride him, John, and then tell me how he goes.'

John put a saddle on my back, but it was too small, and he changed it. He got another saddle, not

too big and not too small, and we went out. He was a very good rider, and I knew just what he wanted. On the road we went at a walk, then at a trot. I tried to make him like riding me. Then he took me off the road to some open land with just a few trees and a lot of grass. There he wanted me to gallop, and I galloped hard. How good that was! I liked it very much, and I think John liked it.

When we were back at Birtwick Park, the Squire asked John Manly, 'Well, John, how does he go?'

'He's very good—very good. He goes like a bird, and he loves a gallop, but if you move the reins just a little, he knows what you want: he stops, or he goes to one side or the other. Nobody has ever been unkind to him, so he is not afraid of anybody or anything.'

'I'm glad to hear it,' Squire Gordon said. 'I'll try him myself tomorrow.'

The next day, John groomed me and put the saddle on me. Then he led me from the stables to the house.

I remembered what my mother told me and I tried to do just what the Squire wanted me to do. He was a very good rider, and he was kind to me all the way.

His wife was at the door of the big house when he took me back there.

'Well, my dear, ' she said, 'how do you like him?'

'He is just what John said,' Squire Gordon

answered. 'He's the nicest horse I've ever ridden. What shall we call him?'

'He's black and very beautiful. We could call him Black Beauty, couldn't we?'

'Black Beauty—yes—yes, I think that's a very good name.'

John came to lead me to the stables.

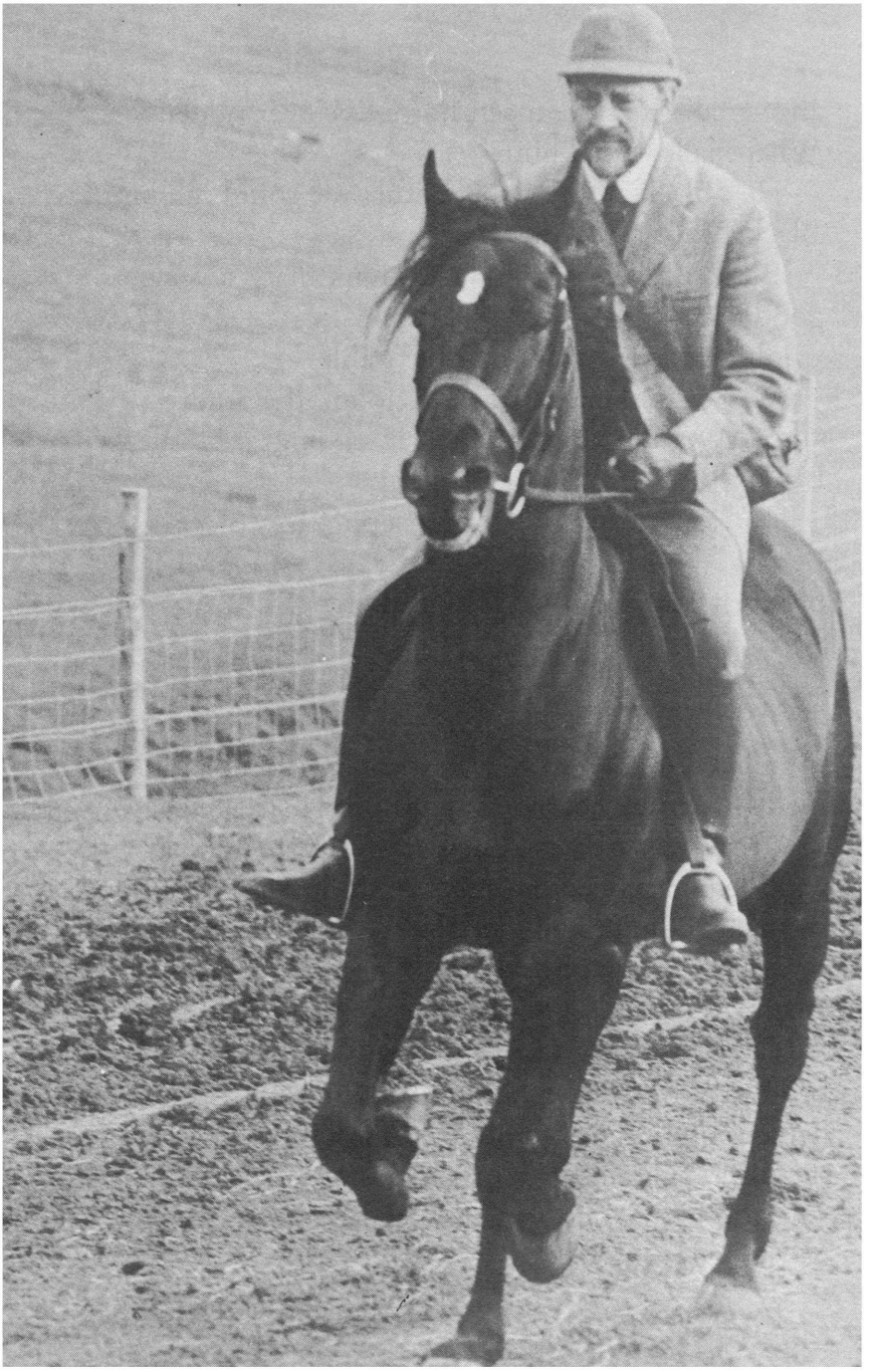
'We've got a name for him, John,' the Squire said. 'My wife thought of it. He's going to be Black Beauty.'

John was very glad. 'Come along, my Black Beauty,' he said, as he led me away. 'You ARE a beauty—and it's a good English name.'

5 *My new friends*

John liked me. He was a very good groom, and he made my black coat look beautiful. He looked at my feet every day. He knew if one of them hurt, and then he rubbed something into it. He talked to me a lot. I didn't know all the words, but after a time I knew what he was thinking. I liked John Manly as much as I have ever liked anybody.

I liked the stable boy, James Howard, too. He had learnt from John how to be kind to horses. He helped John to groom me, and John showed him the places where a groom may hurt a horse if he rubs too hard, and the places where a horse likes to be rubbed or patted.



After a few days, I went out to pull a carriage with Ginger. I was afraid of her. She laid her ears back when they led me towards her, but she stood still as they harnessed me beside her.

John drove us, and we worked very well. Ginger wasn't at all lazy. She pulled as hard as I did up the hills, and she was always ready to move more quickly. Many horses don't go fast if the driver doesn't hit them with his whip. Ginger was like me: we went as fast as we could if the driver wanted us to go fast. John didn't like the whip, and he never whipped us, but we worked hard for him.

After Ginger and I had been out a few times with the carriage, we became good friends.

We liked little Merrylegs very much. He was brave and always happy. The Squire's little girls loved to ride him, and they were never afraid of falling off his back.

Mrs Gordon, the Squire's wife, loved all three of us, and we loved her.

Squire Gordon liked his people to have one day without work every week. His horses had the same. On Sunday they led us to a field of good grass, and we stayed there for the day, without reins or harness of any kind. We ran, and played, and were happy. Then we stood under some trees and told stories.

6 *The bridge*

One day in November, the Squire wanted to see some men in Hertford. It was a long journey, so John harnessed me to the dog-cart. I always liked the dog-cart. With its big wheels it wasn't at all hard to pull. John Manly drove, and my master sat beside him.

A lot of rain had fallen, and it was a bad day. In one place the road went across a river by a wooden bridge. There was so much water in the river that some parts of the bridge were covered. But we could see the good wooden sides, and the bridge didn't move under my feet. I wasn't afraid, and we went across.

My master's work made him stay for a few hours in Hertford. Night was falling as we began the journey home. It was raining again.

My master was driving. When we came to the bridge, he didn't pull the reins at all. So I began to take the dog-cart across the river. As soon as my feet were on the bridge, I knew that we mustn't go over it.

I stopped.

'Go across,' my master said. 'Go across, Beauty. Don't be afraid. There's a little water over the bridge, but it's not a lot.' He touched me with the whip, but I stood still.

'He's afraid of something,' John said. And he jumped down and came to my head. 'Come,

Beauty,' he said, and he tried to lead me over the bridge.

I still knew that we mustn't go. I couldn't move.

There was a house on the other side of the river for the man who worked on the road. Just then the man heard us and saw the lights of the dog-cart through his window. He ran out of the house with a lamp, shouting, 'Stop! Stop! Wait!'

He came to his side of the bridge and shouted to us. 'Part of the bridge has gone down the river,' he called. 'The water washed it away. You can't come across. You must go up the river to the next bridge.'

'Thank God!' my master said.

'You Beauty!' John said to me, and he led me away from the bridge.

As we went towards the other bridge, Squire Gordon and John Manly said nothing for a time. Then they began to speak about the thing that had happened at the bridge. My master said that men know how to think and to find the answers to questions. God has made them in that way. But God has made horses and some other friends of man in another way. They know some things without thinking, and because of that, they can sometimes save men.

'Yes,' John said. And he told some stories about horses who had saved their masters.

When we got to Birtwick Park, Mrs Gordon ran out. 'Oh, I'm so glad to see you at last! Has

something bad happened?'

'No, my dear,' the Squire said. 'But we could have died if Black Beauty hadn't saved us.' He went into the house with her, telling her about what happened at the bridge.

John drove to the stables and unharnessed me. Oh, what a good dinner he gave me that night! And how well he groomed me and did little things to show his thanks!

7 *James Howard*

The Squire came to the stables one day and spoke to John Manly. 'How is James working, John?' he asked.

'Very well,' John answered. 'He has learnt a lot. He is kind to the horses, and the horses like him. He's learning to drive, and he'll soon be a good driver.'

Just then, James himself came in. 'James,' the Squire said, 'I have a letter from my friend Sir Clifford Williams, of Clifford Hall. He asks me to find a good young groom for him. The pay is good, and the young man will soon be head groom, with his own room, stable clothes, driving clothes, and boys to help him. I don't want to lose you, and John will be sad to see you go —'

'I will. Yes, I will,' John said. 'But I wouldn't try to stop him.'

'Yes, we would all be sad,' the Squire said, 'but we want you to do well. Speak to your mother at dinner time, James, and then tell me if you want me to send your name to Sir Clifford.'

Ginger and Merrylegs and I were sad, too, when we heard that James wanted to go. But we knew that it would be better for him.

For six weeks before James went, we worked hard. He wanted to be a very good driver, and our master and John Manly wanted to help him. So the carriage went out every day, with Ginger and myself harnessed to it, and James driving. James learnt very quickly. For a few weeks John sat beside him, but after that James drove alone.

'I must go to the city again,' our master said, time after time. And we always went at bad times, when there were a lot of carriages, dog-carts, riders and people walking, all going to meet the train, or going home across the bridge after work.

Then one day the Squire said to John Manly, 'Mrs Gordon and I must go to Oxford tomorrow. We'll have Ginger and Black Beauty with the big carriage, and James will drive us.'

It was a journey of about seventy-five kilometres to Oxford. We went about fifty kilometres in one day and then stopped for the night at the biggest hotel in Aylesbury. James drove very well. We pulled the carriage up a lot of hills, and he always stopped on the way up. He never drove us fast

down a hill. He found the best part of the road for our feet, and he made us trot when the road was good, but not up hills or on bad roads. All these things help a horse, and if he gets kind words too, he is happy.

We had a good grooming in the hotel stable, and some good food, and then James patted us and said, 'Good night, my beauties. Sleep well, Ginger. Sleep well, Black Beauty.' Then he went to his own bed.

8 *The fire*

An hour after that, a man came to the hotel on a horse. One of the hotel grooms brought the horse to the stable.

At Birtwick Park nobody ever smoked in the stables, but this man was smoking. There was no food in the part of the stable where the new horse was, so the groom went to get some. The food for the horses was on the floor over the stable. The groom went up there, threw some food down for the horse, and went away.

I slept, but I soon woke up again. I was very unhappy, but I didn't know why I was unhappy.

I heard Ginger. She was moving her feet and I heard her smelling the air.

Then I smelt the smoke too.

Very soon the stable was full of smoke. There were noises from over my head—noises of burning.

The other horses in the stable were all awake. They were moving their feet and trying to get away from the smoke.

I was afraid. I was never so afraid before, and I have never been so afraid again.

At last the hotel groom came into the stable and tried to lead the horses out. But he was afraid himself, and he tried to work too quickly. That made us still more afraid. The other horses would not go with him, and when he came to me, he tried to pull me out fast. He pulled and pulled. I couldn't go with him.

We were foolish—yes! But we didn't know him, and he was so afraid!

There was more and more smoke. And then we saw the red light of fire coming from the floor over our heads. We heard a cry of 'Fire!' outside, and more men came into the stable.

The noise of the fire grew greater and greater. And then—

James was at my head. He was speaking to me just like every morning: 'Come, my beauty. It's time for us to go. Just wake up and come along. We'll soon be out of all this smoke.'

He took the cloth from his neck and put it round my head over my eyes. Then I couldn't see the fire, and I wasn't so afraid. He patted me all the time and spoke to me like a good friend as we walked out to the clean air outside the stable.

'Here, somebody,' James called. 'Take this horse, and I'll go back for the other.'

A big man took me, and James ran back into the stable. I was very unhappy as I saw him run back into the burning stable, and I cried out. (Ginger told me the next day that my cry saved her. Because she heard me outside, she was brave, and so she came with James.)

A lot of things were happening all round me, but I looked at the stable door all the time. There was fire and smoke inside, and I heard things falling.

My master came running towards the stable. 'James! James Howard!' he called. 'Are you there?' There was no answer, but I heard noises of big things falling in the stable, and I was very much afraid for James and Ginger.

How glad I was when James and Ginger came through the smoke towards us.

'Brave boy!' the Squire cried. 'Are you hurt?'

James couldn't speak because of the smoke, but he showed that he wasn't hurt, and he patted Ginger's neck and looked happy.

9 *Little Joe Green*

James and Ginger were ill the next day. They had burns in a few places, and the smoke had been bad for them. So we stayed in Aylesbury for that day, but after another night there, they were better, and

in the morning we went to Oxford.

James did everything he could to help Ginger to get better, and he spoke to older grooms who could tell him the best things to do for us. By the time we were back at Birtwick Park, we were all much better.

John heard James Howard's story, and he looked at Ginger and myself.

'You did well, James,' he said. 'It's very hard to get horses out of a stable when there is a fire. Nobody knows why they don't want to move, but they'll stay there if there isn't somebody they know to lead them out—somebody they know and love.'

Just as they were going, James asked, 'Do you know who is coming in my place?'

'Yes,' John said. 'Little Joe Green, the gardener's son.'

'Little Joe Green! But he's a child!'

'He's fourteen,' John said.

'But he's so small.'

'Yes, he is small, but he's quick, and ready to learn, and kind. His father would be glad if he came, and I know the master would like to have him here.'

James was still not very happy about it. 'He's a good boy,' he said, 'but there'll be a lot of work for you because he's so small.'

'Well,' John said, 'work and I are good friends. I have never been afraid of work.'

'I know that. And I'll try hard to be like you.'

The next day, Joe came to the stables to learn as much as he could before James went. He learnt to clean the stable, to bring in our food; he began to clean the harness, and helped to wash the carriages. He was much too small to groom Ginger or me, so James showed him how to groom Merrylegs.

Merrylegs wasn't very pleased. 'Why must I be pulled about by a boy who knows nothing?' he said. But after a week or two he said, 'I think the boy will be good in time. I'll help him to learn quickly.'

Little Joe Green was a happy boy. He sang as he worked, and we soon grew to like him very much.

10 *Going for the doctor*

There was a bell at the stables to call a groom to the house. One night, after James had gone away, the bell rang. The noise woke me, and I heard John running to the house. He ran back, opened the stable door, and came to me.

'Wake up, Beauty. You must go your fastest now!'

He put a saddle on me very quickly, jumped on my back, and rode me at a fast trot to the house. The Squire was there, with a lamp in his hand.

'Now, John,' he said, 'you must ride as fast as you can. My wife is very ill. Give this note to Doctor White in Hertford. I want him to come at once. Come back yourself when Black Beauty is ready for the journey.'

John took the note, and away we went.

It was night, but I knew the road, and there were no people on it. They were all in bed and asleep. I had never galloped so fast.

When we came to the bridge, John pulled on the reins a little, and I went across at a trot. On the other side, he didn't ask me to gallop again, but I did. We galloped up hills and down hills, by fields and by houses, and then through the streets of Hertford.

My iron shoes made a noise on the stones as I stopped at the doctor's door. The doctor's window opened, and Doctor White looked out.

'What do you want?' he asked.

'Mrs Gordon is very ill,' John told him. 'My master wants you to go at once. He thinks that she'll die if you can't get there. Here's a note.'

'I'll come down.' He shut the window and was soon at the door. He read the note. 'Yes,' he said, 'I must go. But I don't know what to do. My old horse has been out all day, and he can't even trot now. My other horse is ill. What can I do? Can I have your horse?'

'He has come at a gallop nearly all the way,' John said, 'but I think he can take you.'

'I'll soon be ready,' the doctor said, and he went back into the house.

John stood by me and patted my neck. I was very hot.

The doctor came out in his riding clothes and with a riding whip.

'You don't need a whip,' John said. 'Black Beauty will go as fast as he can.'

'Thank you,' the doctor said. He gave the whip to John and spoke to me: 'Now, Black Beauty!'

11 *Mrs Gordon is saved*

The doctor was a bigger man than John, and he was not a very good rider. But I did my best.

I was nearly falling when we got to Birtwick Park, but we got there very quickly. My master had heard us coming, and he was at the door. He took the doctor into the house at once.

Little Joe Green was waiting at the door too. He led me to the stable. I was glad to be home. I was very, very hot. My coat was very hot, and water ran off my body down my legs. I had galloped too far and too fast, and I couldn't get as much air as I wanted.

Poor Joe! He was young and very small, and he hadn't had time to learn much. His father would have helped, but he was away.

Joe did his best. He rubbed my legs and part of my body, but he didn't put my cloth on me; he thought that I was so hot that I wouldn't like it. Then he brought a lot of water for me to drink. It was cold and very nice, and I drank it all. Then he

gave me some food.

'Now go to sleep, Beauty,' he said, and he went away.

I was very ill when John came. He had walked all the way from Hertford, but he came to see me as soon as he got home. I was down on the floor, and he came quickly to my side.

'Oh, my poor Beauty!' he said. 'What have we done to you?'

I couldn't tell him how I was, but he knew. He covered me with two or three cloths. Then he ran to his house to get hot water and make a good drink for me. He was angry.

'A foolish boy!' I heard him say. 'A foolish boy! No cloth on a hot horse! Cold water to drink! Poor Beauty!'

I was very ill for more than a week. John was with me for hours every day, and he came to see me two or three times every night. Squire Gordon came every day too.

'My poor Beauty,' he said one day, 'my good horse! You saved my wife, Beauty! Yes, you saved her.'

I was very glad to hear that. We all loved Mrs Gordon.

Even Doctor White came to see me one day when he was at Birtwick Park. He patted me as he told John, 'Mrs Gordon is alive today because this beautiful horse brought me here so quickly.'

I heard John say to the Squire, 'I never saw a horse gallop so fast as Black Beauty did that night. You would think that he knew.'

I *did* know. Or I knew that John and I must go as fast as we could, and that it was for our dear master's wife.

12 *Another move*

I was happy at Birtwick Park for another year. Just one thing made us sad: Mrs Gordon got better, but she was never well for more than a few weeks. At last the doctor said that she must go away and live in the south of France. Squire Gordon said that they would all go and make a new home there.

We were all very sad. The Squire looked most unhappy, but he began at once to get ready for the move. We heard a lot of talk about it in the stable. John was very sad, and Joe nearly stopped singing as he worked.

Squire Gordon's little girls came to the stable to see Merrylegs for the last time. They cried a lot, but they told Merrylegs:

'You'll be happy, old friend. Father is giving you to Mr Good, the kind old churchman. You'll take his wife from place to place, but you will never work hard. Joe will go with you; he's going to be the groom and help in their house beside the church. You'll see your friends Black Beauty and Ginger

sometimes. Father has sold them to Lord Westland at Earls Hall. That isn't very far away.'

The Squire was ready to help John to get work in a good place. But John wanted to open a school where young horses could learn their work. 'Too many young horses learn in a way that makes them afraid,' he said. 'Horses are my friends, and they like me. I think they'll learn better from someone who is kind, and I should like them to learn in my way.'

'I don't know a man who could do it better,' Squire Gordon said. 'Horses don't just like you; they love you. I'm very sad to lose friends like you.'

The last day came. Ginger and I brought the carriage to the door for the last time. The people who worked in the house were at the door as the Squire brought his wife down in his arms. Many of them were crying as we moved away.

13 *Earls Hall*

The next morning, Joe came to see us and then took Merrylegs away to Mr and Mrs Good's house.

John rode Ginger and led me to Earls Hall. It was a very big house with a lot of stables.

At the stables John asked for Mr York, the head of all the drivers and grooms.

Mr York came and looked at us. 'Very good,' he said. 'They look very good, but you and I know that horses are not all the same. What can you tell

me about these two?'

'Well,' John said, 'there aren't any better horses in the country, but they aren't the same. Black Beauty here is never angry or afraid because nobody has ever been unkind to him. When she came to us, Ginger was not like that at all. She was always ready to bite and kick. Someone had made her very unhappy. She has changed at Birtwick Park. We have been kind to her, and she has been very good for three years or more. But I'm afraid she could be bad again if people are unkind to her.'

'I'll remember that,' Mr York said. 'But there are a lot of drivers and grooms here, and I can't see all of them all the time.'

They were going out of the stable when John stopped and said, 'I must tell you that none of our horses at Birtwick Park ever had a bearing rein.'

'Well, they must have a bearing rein here. I don't like bearing reins myself, and Lord Westland is very kind to horses. But Lady Westland—that's another thing. For her, everything must look good. Her carriage horses must have their heads up because that's the London way. So they must have bearing reins.'

John came to each of us to pat us and speak to us for the last time. Then he went, and we were very sad.

Lord Westland came to look at us the next day.

'Gordon told me that they were good horses,' he

said, 'and they look good. But we can't have one black horse and one brown pulling a carriage in London. They can pull the carriage here in the country, and in London we can ride them.'

York told him what John had said about bearing reins.

'Well,' Lord Westland said, 'put the bearing rein on, but pull it up a little at a time. I'll speak to Lady Westland about it.'

In the afternoon Ginger and I were harnessed to a carriage and then a groom led us to the front of the house. It was very big—four times as big as Birtwick Park—but I didn't like the look of it very much.

Lady Westland came out. She walked round us, looking at us. Something didn't please her, but she didn't say anything. She got into the carriage. York touched us with the whip, and we moved away at a walk.

I had never had a bearing rein before, but it wasn't bad that day. I always walked or trotted with my head up, and the rein just stopped me putting it down. I was afraid that Ginger would be angry, but she was very good.

At the same time the next day we were at the door again. The lady came out and said:

'York, you must pull those horses' heads up. I will not ride in a carriage with horses like that!'

York got down and said: 'Please don't be angry with me, my lady, but these horses haven't had a

bearing rein for three years, and Lord Westland told me to pull their heads up a little at a time. Do you want me to pull them up a little more?'

'Yes!'

York came to our heads and made the reins a little shorter—one hole, I think.

When we came to a hill, we wanted to put our heads down a little and so pull harder. The bearing rein stopped us, and that gave our legs and backs much more work.

Ginger said to me, 'Now you see what it's like. This isn't too bad. If they don't pull the rein up any more, I shall say nothing, because they are kind to us here in every other way. But if they do pull it up hard, I'll do something bad. I don't want to be bad, but bearing reins make me very angry.'

14 *Ginger kicks out*

One day Lady Westland came out in very rich clothes.

'Drive to Lady Richmond's house,' she said. But she didn't get into the carriage. 'Are you never going to get those horses' heads up, York? Pull them up at once!'

York came to me first. He pulled my head back with the bearing rein so far that it hurt my neck, and the bit cut my mouth.

Then he went to Ginger and began to do the

same to her. Up went Ginger on her back legs. Her ears were laid back, and her eyes were very angry. She began to kick and tried to get away from the carriage. York and the groom couldn't make her stop, and at last she caught her legs in the harness and fell.

York sat on Ginger's head and told the groom to get a knife and cut the harness. Lady Westland went into the house.

Ginger was hurt in a lot of places, and she was still very angry and ready to kick and bite. Nobody had time for me. I stood there, with my head pulled back and the bit hurting my mouth, for a long time.

At last York came and took off the bearing rein. I heard him saying to himself:

'Why must we have these bearing reins? They make good horses bad, and they make our work harder. Lord Westland will be angry with me for doing what his wife told me to do. But how can I say no to her when he never does so?'

Ginger was never put into carriage harness again at Earls Hall. When she was better, one of Lord Westland's younger sons took her as his riding horse. I still worked with the carriage, and for four months the bearing rein hurt me every day. I worked with an older horse named Max. He came from Lord Westland's stables in London.

'Why must we be hurt like this?' I asked him.

'It's the London way,' he said. 'In London the rich

people's horses must have their heads up. It has made me ill, and that's why I have come here. I'll die soon, and you'll die before you're old if you have the bearing rein every day. People are very foolish, aren't they?'

15 *Reuben Smith*

In April, Lord and Lady Westland went to their London house and took York with them. Ginger and I and a few other horses stayed at Earls Hall for their sons and their sons' friends.

Reuben Smith was head of the stables when York was away. He was a very good driver and a good groom. He liked horses, and horses liked him. So why was he just a groom? Why wasn't he a head driver like York?

Max told me about him.

Reuben Smith drank. When he wasn't drunk, he was very good at his work. Everybody liked him. But when he was drunk, he wasn't the same man.

'I'll never drink again,' he had told York. And so York was not afraid to have Smith as head of the stables when he himself was away.

One day Lord Westland's younger son wanted to go to London. 'I'll get on the train at Hertford,' he told Smith. 'I want you to drive me there in my carriage. It can stay in the carriage-maker's in Hertford, because I want him to put a new wheel

on. So bring a saddle and ride Black Beauty back to Earls Hall.'

Reuben Smith drove me to the carriage-maker's and then put the saddle on me and rode me to the White Horse hotel. There he told the hotel groom to give me some good food.

'Have him ready for me at four,' he said.

He went towards the hotel, and I saw him meet some men at the door. He came out at five and told the hotel groom, 'I don't want to go before six. I've met some old friends.'

The groom had just seen one of my front shoes. 'That shoe may fall off soon,' he told Smith. 'Shall I see about it?' he asked.

'No,' Smith said. 'It can't fall off before we get home.'

That wasn't like Reuben Smith. He never spoke in that way, and he always saw that our shoes were on well. The way he spoke wasn't like him, and I was unhappy.

He didn't come out at six—or at seven—or at eight. At nine he came out of the hotel with a lot of noise and shouted for the hotel groom to bring his horse. He was very angry with the groom—I didn't know why—and with everybody in the hotel.

We weren't out of Hertford when he began to hit me with his whip. Even when I was galloping as fast as I could, he still whipped me. The moon wasn't up, and I couldn't see well. There were a lot

of stones on the road, and my shoe soon fell off.

Still he whipped me and shouted at me. He had drunk much too much, or he would have known that my shoe was off. It was a bad road, but he made me gallop over it. The stones cut into all my feet, most of all into the foot without a shoe.

At last I fell. I was galloping so fast that Smith was thrown over my head on to the road. He didn't move.

My legs were very badly cut in the fall, but I stood up. I moved to the side of the road, off the stones, and waited.

16 *Sold*

I waited there for a long time.

At last I heard Max and the dog-cart coming over the stones. I cried out to Max, and he answered.

There were two grooms in the dog-cart. They had come to look for Reuben. One of them jumped out and went to the unmoving body on the road.

'It's Reuben,' he said. 'He's dead—cold and dead!'

The other groom got out of the dog-cart and came to me. By the light of the dog-cart lamps he saw that my legs were very badly cut.

'Black Beauty has fallen!' he said. 'Black Beauty! We never thought that *he* would fall. What happened?' He tried to lead me towards the dog-cart, and I nearly fell again. 'Oh!' he said. 'Black Beauty's

foot is bad too. Look—it's very badly cut. And no shoe! It's not like Reuben to ride a horse without a shoe. It was drink again, I'm afraid.'

They put Reuben Smith's body into the dog-cart, and then one of the grooms drove it towards Earls Hall. The other man put a cloth round my bad foot and led me along the grass beside the road.

The cuts on my legs and my bad foot hurt me all the time, but at last we got home.

I wasn't better for weeks after that. The grooms did everything that they could to help me, but the cuts were very bad. When I could walk, they put me into a small field. There my foot and my legs grew better after many weeks.

One day Lord Westland came to the field with York. He looked at my legs. The cuts were better but the marks were still there.

'Will the marks ever go?' Lord Westland asked.

'No, my lord,' York answered. 'They'll always be there.'

Lord Westland was angry. 'We must sell him,' he said. 'I can't have a horse with legs like that in my stables. I'm very sad, because my friend Gordon wanted Black Beauty to have a happy home here. But you must send him to Hampstead to be sold.'

And so I was taken to Hampstead on a day when they were selling horses.

A lot of people came to look at me. The richer people went away as soon as they saw the marks on

my legs. Others walked round me, pulled my mouth open, looked at my eyes, ran their hands over my legs, made me walk and trot. Some of them did these things with a hard hand: for them I was just a working beast. Others spoke to me, touched me with kind hands, patted me—and learnt much more about me.

I liked one of the kind men very much. 'I could be happy with him,' I thought. He had a nice smell, and I knew that he liked horses and was kind to them. He was a small man, but he moved well and quickly, and his hands and his eyes were friendly.

'I'll give twenty-three pounds for this horse,' he said.

But the man who was selling me wanted more. 'Say twenty-five and you can have him.'

'Twenty-four and no more,' the little man said.

'Yes, I'll take twenty-four. And you've got a very good horse for your money. If you want him for cab work, you'll be very pleased with him.'

The money was paid, and my new master led me away to a hotel, where he had a saddle ready. He gave me some very good food, and soon we were on our way to London.

17 *A London cab horse*

The streets of the great city were full of horses and ponies, carriages and dog-carts—everything on

wheels that you can think of. It was night, but I had never seen so many people as there were under the street lamps.

There were streets and streets and streets. At last my new master called out to somebody: 'Good night, Governor.' We were going along a street where a lot of cabs were waiting, one behind another, at a cab stand.

'Hello, Jerry!' came the answer. 'Have you got a good one?'

'I think I have.'

'I'm very glad, Jerry. Good night.'

Soon after that, we went up a side street, and then into another street with small, rather poor-looking houses on one side and stables and carriage-houses on the other.

My owner stopped me at one of the little houses and called: 'Are you still awake?'

The door opened, and a young woman ran out, with a little girl and a boy. 'Hello! Hello! Hello!' they cried happily as my rider got down from the saddle.

'Hello!' he said. 'Now, Harry, open the stable door and I'll lead him in.'

Soon we were all in the little stable. The woman had a lamp in her hand, and they looked at me.

'Is he good, Father?'

'Yes, Dolly, as good as you are. Come and pat him.'

At once a very small hand patted me. The little

girl was not at all afraid, and I knew that I was going to love her.

'I'll get him some nice food, Jerry,' the woman said, 'and you rub him down.'

'Yes, that's what we'll do, Polly.'

Jerry loved his wife Polly and his son Harry, who was twelve years old, and his daughter Dolly, who was eight. They all loved him. I have never known happier people. They were very poor because a cabman never got much money. But they were always kind, and their love came out of the little house to the stable.

Jerry had his own cab and two horses. The other horse was a big old white horse called Captain. That night, Captain told me about the work of a London cab horse.

'Only one of us is harnessed to the cab at a time,' he said. 'Our master works for about sixteen hours each day from Monday to Saturday, but each of us will work for only eight hours. It's hard work, but Jerry is never unkind. A lot of cabmen *are* unkind, but not Jerry. You'll love him.'

Captain went out with the cab in the morning. Harry came into the stable after school to give me food and water.

When Jerry came home for his dinner, Polly cleaned the cab and Harry helped Jerry to put the harness on me. They took a long time putting on my collar and other parts of the harness so that they

wouldn't rub me too hard. There was no bearing rein, and the bit didn't hurt.

'I think he'll be happy like that,' Jerry said.

'What's his name?' Polly asked.

'The man who sold him didn't know. Shall we call him Jack, like the last one, Polly?'

So, as Jack, I began work as a London cab horse.

18 *Jerry Barker*

We went down the side street and out to the cab stand. Jerry took his place as the last of the line of cabs waiting there.

A big cabman came to see me with other drivers. This was the 'Governor', the oldest of the cabmen there. He looked at me and touched my neck and body and legs.

'Yes,' he said, 'he's the best horse for you, Jerry Barker. Even if you paid a lot of money for him, you have done well.'

For a few days my work as a London cab horse was very hard. The great city was a new place for me. The noise, the thousands of people, the horses, carriages, dog-carts and other things that filled the streets—all these made me unhappy when I was beginning my work there. But I soon found that Jerry was a very good driver, and he found that I was ready to work hard. After that, we did well.

Jerry never whipped me. Sometimes he just

touched me with the whip; and that told me—'Go.' But at most times I knew what he wanted from the way that he moved the reins.

Captain and I were always well groomed, and we had good food and a clean stable.

Sometimes Jerry wouldn't take a person who wanted to go fast. 'No,' he said. 'You want to go fast because you have been lazy. You must begin your journey sooner, and then you'll get there without going fast.'

Even if they wanted to give him more money, he wouldn't make his horse go very fast to help 'lazy' people.

But after I learnt how to get along through the London streets, we *could* go faster than most cabs. 'We're ready to go fast if somebody *must* get somewhere quickly, aren't we, Jack?' Jerry said, patting me.

We knew the quickest ways to the hospitals in London, and sometimes we made very quick journeys to them.

One rainy day we had just taken a man to his hotel when a poor young woman spoke to Jerry. She had a little boy in her arms, and he looked very ill.

'Can you tell me the way to St Thomas's Hospital?' she asked. 'I have come from the country, and I don't know London. The doctor has given me a note for St Thomas's Hospital. He says the hospital

can save my son.'

'It's a long way, dear,' Jerry said. 'You can't walk there—not in this rain and with the boy in your arms. Just get into the cab and I'll take you there.'

'Thank you, but I can't do that. I haven't got any money.'

'Who said anything about money? I'm a father, and I love children. I'll be happy to take you. Please get in.'

He helped her into the cab. She was crying, and he patted her arm. Then he got up and took the reins. 'Come on, Jack,' he said. 'Away we go!'

At the hospital Jerry helped the young woman through the big front door.

'Thank you, thank you!' she said. 'You're a good, kind man.'

A lady was coming out of the hospital. She heard the words and looked at the 'good, kind man'.

'Jerry Barker!' she said.

19 *Another change*

We took the lady to her train. Her name was Mrs Fowler, and she knew Jerry because Polly had once worked for her at her home in the country. She asked a lot of questions about Polly and the two children. Then she said:

'And how are you, yourself, Jerry? Does the cold still make you ill every year?'

'Yes, it does, Mrs Fowler. I was very ill last January.'

Mrs Fowler looked sad. 'You must find other work, Jerry. You can't be a cabman any more.'

'I would like to find work in the country. It would be better for Polly and the children. But there isn't much work that I can do in the country.'

Every year Jerry was ill. He didn't stop working, and he became more and more ill.

Polly cried about it, but she didn't know what to do.

Then one day, after I had been a cab horse for five years, a letter came for Polly. It was from Mrs Fowler:

Dear Polly,

My groom has found other work, and he wants to go next month. His wife will go with him, and she is my cook.

Would you like to work for me—Jerry as my groom and driver (Harry could help him), and you as my cook? There's a little house for you if you come.

Please say you will.

Yours,
Mary Fowler

Jerry and Polly spoke about it for two days. Then Polly wrote an answer. Her letter said that Jerry and she would be very happy to work for Mrs

Fowler.

I was very glad for them, but I was sad that there would be another change for me. I had grown to love Jerry and Polly and the two children.

Some of Jerry's cabman friends wanted to have me, but Jerry wanted me to have a better home. 'Jack's getting old,' he said, 'and the work of a cab horse is too hard.'

Just before Jerry, Polly and the children went away, Jerry sold me to a farmer who lived just outside London.

This Mr Thoroughgood knew a lot about horses. 'I'll take your horse Jack,' he said. 'I'll give him the best food and a few weeks in a good field. Then I'll find a new master for him—somebody good and kind.'

So Mr Thoroughgood led me away. It was April, and Jerry was still ill after a bad time in January and February, but he was getting better. He came out, with Polly and Harry and Dolly, to give me a last pat.

'You'll be happy, dear old Jack,' Dolly said. 'I'll always remember you.'

20 *My last home*

Mr Thoroughgood was very kind to me, and on his farm I had a very happy time. 'I'm nearly growing younger,' I thought. But I wasn't a young

horse now.

Mr Thoroughgood told the groom, 'We must find a good home for Jack—a place where there's work for him but not hard work and not too much.'

'The old ladies at Rose Hall are looking for a good horse that they can drive in a dog-cart. They aren't very brave, and they don't want a young horse that may go too fast or run away.'

Mr Thoroughgood thought about that. Then he said, 'If they like Jack, he is just the horse for them. But they may be afraid when they see the marks of a fall on his legs. We'll take him to Rose Hall tomorrow and ask them to look at him.'

So the next morning the groom made my black coat look beautiful, and then Mr Thoroughgood took me to Rose Hall.

The old ladies were at home, but their driver was away. One of the old ladies, Miss Ellen, liked me at once.

'He has a very good, kind face,' she said. 'I know that we'll love him.'

'He's very good,' Mr Thoroughgood said, 'but I must show you the marks on his legs. He has had a fall.'

'Oh!' Miss Ellen's older sister said. 'Do you think he'll fall again?'

'I don't think so,' the farmer said. 'A lot of horses have the marks of a fall because of a bad driver. I think Jack's fall may have been like that. I have had

him for a few weeks, and he has been very good. Would you like to try him, Miss Bloomfield? Send your driver for him tomorrow, and let him try Jack for a few days.'

The old lady looked happier. 'You have always sold us very good horses, Mr Thoroughgood,' she said. 'Thank you. We'll do that.'

The next morning a good-looking young man came to Mr Thoroughgood's farm. He looked at me and saw the marks on my legs. Then he asked Mr Thoroughgood:

'Why are you selling my ladies a horse that has had a bad fall?'

The farmer answered, 'I'm not selling him before you and the ladies have tried him. I think you'll like him, but he can come back here if you don't.'

The groom led me away to Rose Hall.

That evening he began to groom me. When he was rubbing my face, he stopped and looked at the white star.

'This is just like the star that Black Beauty had,' he said. 'His head is like Black Beauty's head too. I should like to know where Black Beauty is now.'

When he came to my back, he stopped again. 'Here's a little white mark just like Black Beauty's.'

The groom stood back and looked at me. 'Black Beauty's star! Black Beauty's one white foot! Black Beauty's mark on the back! It *is* Black Beauty! You *are* Black Beauty, aren't you, my old friend? Beauty!

Beauty! Do you know me? I was little Joe Green, and I nearly killed you.' And he began patting me and patting me.

I remembered a small boy, and this was a grown man. But I saw that it *was* Joe Green, and I was very glad. I put my nose up to him, and I tried to show him that we were friends. I never saw a man so pleased.

'You have had a hard time,' he said, 'but we'll try to make you happy here.'

The next day Joe groomed me again and harnessed me to a very good dog-cart. Miss Ellen wanted to try me, and Joe Green went with her. She was a good driver, and she was pleased with me. I heard Joe telling her about me, and saying that I was Squire Gordon's old Black Beauty.

When we came back to Rose Hall, Miss Bloomfield came to the door. 'He's a beautiful horse,' she said. 'Is he a good one too?'

'Yes,' Miss Ellen said, 'very, very good. And do you know who he is? His name is Black Beauty, and he was at Birtwick Park with Squire Gordon. Our dear friend Mrs Gordon loved him. Joe says that the horse saved Mrs Gordon and nearly killed himself for her. I'm going to write to Mrs Gordon. She'll be very pleased that we have Black Beauty here.'

The next day I was harnessed to the carriage, and Miss Bloomfield went for a drive. She was pleased

with me. I heard her say to Miss Ellen, 'We'll have the horse and call him by his old name, Black Beauty.'

I have been in this happy place for a year now. Joe is the best and kindest groom, and everybody loves me. The ladies say that they will never sell me, so there is nothing for me to be afraid of. I'll work gladly for them for as long as I can.

Questions

1 *My mother*
   1 What were the other young horses going to be?

2 *Learning*
   1 What is the 'bad part' of a horse's harness?

3 *Birtwick Park*
   1 Why did Birtwick Park have a lot of stables? – Because there were . . .
   2 Why does Ginger bite?—Because. . .

4 *I begin well*
   1 Who was the head groom at Birtwick Park?
   2 Who thought of the name Black Beauty?

5 *My new friends*
   1 What did John do if Black Beauty's foot hurt?
   2 Who was Black Beauty afraid of?

6 *The bridge*
   1 Who was driving on the journey home?
   2 Why did Black Beauty stop?

7 *James Howard*
   1 Who wanted a good groom?
   2 Where did they stop for the night?

8 *The fire*
   1 What did Black Beauty smell?
   2 Who tried to lead the horses out of the stable?

9 *Little Joe Green*
   1 Why did they stay in Aylesbury for another night?
   2 Who came to work in James Howard's place?

10 *Going for the doctor*
   1 Why did the Squire want the doctor to come?
   2 How many horses did the doctor own?
   3 Why did he want to ride Black Beauty?

11 *Mrs Gordon is saved*
   1 Why didn't Joe put a cloth on Black Beauty?
   2 Why did Black Beauty drink all the water?
   3 Why was Black Beauty ill? (Two things)

12 *Another move*
1 What made the horses sad?
2 What did John want to do?

13 *Earls Hall*
1 Why must the horses have bearing reins?
2 Why was it hard to pull the carriage up a hill?

14 *Ginger kicks out*
1 Where did Lady Westland want to go?
2 Why did Ginger fall?
3 Who took Ginger when she was better?

15 *Reuben Smith*
1 Who met Reuben in Hertford?
2 At what time did Reuben leave the hotel?

16 *Sold*
1 Why must Black Beauty be sold?
2 How much did the little man pay for Black Beauty?

17 *A London cab horse*
1 What was the name of Black Beauty's new master?
2 What was Black Beauty's new name?

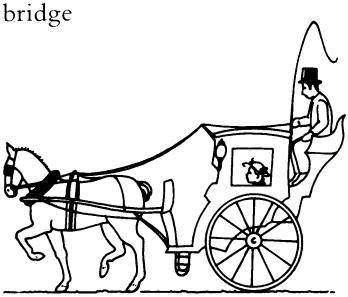
18 *Jerry Barker*
1 What did Jerry say to 'lazy' people?
2 Where did the young woman want to go?
3 Why did she want to go there?

19 *Another change*
1 Why doesn't Jerry work in the country?
2 Who wrote a letter to Polly?
3 Who took Black Beauty?

20 *My last home*
1 Who wanted a good horse but not a young one?
2 Why did Miss Ellen like Black Beauty at once?
3 What was Black Beauty's last home?

List of extra words

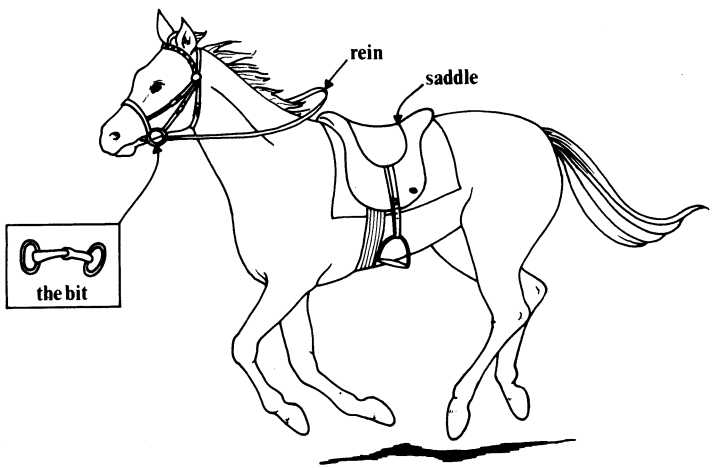
bridge



cab ·
carriage *a car for people, with one or two horses*

doctor

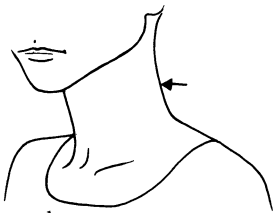
dog-cart *a carriage for two people*
fast *going quickly*
gallop (go at) *a horse's quickest run*
groom *a man whose work is to make a horse clean and well*



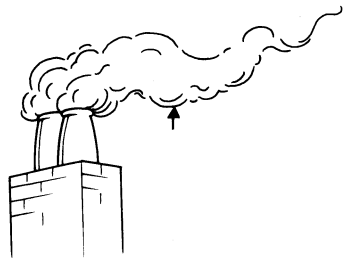
Riding harness

at a gallop

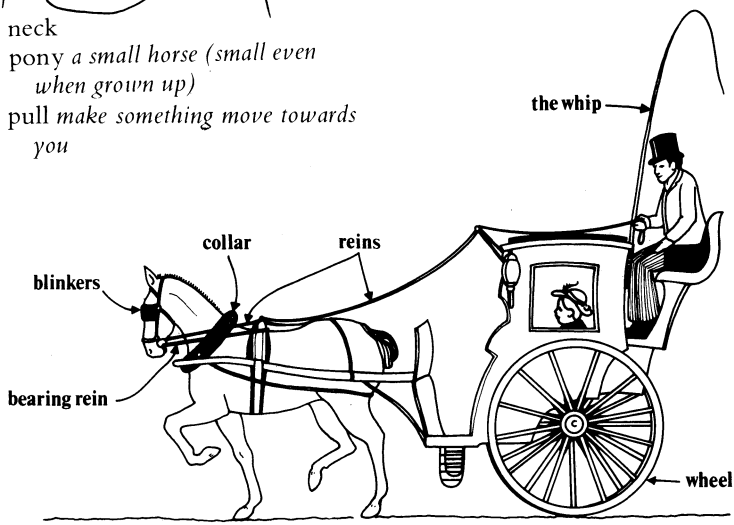
hospital *a place for people who are ill*
hotel *a house where people on a journey can eat and drink, or sleep*
hurt *A thing that cuts us* hurts. *A fall* hurts *a horse's legs.*
learn *get to know*
master *the man who owns a horse*



neck
pony *a small horse (small even when grown up)*
pull *make something move towards you*



smoke
stable *a house for horses*
trot (go at) *a horse's run not so quick as a gallop*



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